

Exhibit No. 2Date 3/13/09Bill No. HB 328**FERGUS COUNTY**

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March 6, 2009State Administration Committee
Montana Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620

Re: House Bill 328

Members of the Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of House Bill 328. In 2006, Fergus County established an advisory group to the County Commissioners. This advisory group is called the Community Council and consists of three (3) members of each of the three (3) Commissioner districts, with a total of nine (9) members. The members receive no salary or fee for this position.

In 2006, all nine (9) positions consisted only of write-in votes on the November ballot. This of course caused the number of votes received by the successful candidate to be lower than if the candidates name appeared on the ballot. Therefore, in 2008, candidates for these positions had to collect only twenty-five (25) signatures on their nomination petition and candidates' names appeared on the ballot. In the November 2008 election, the successful candidate received 4,524 total votes. This means that with the current state law, candidates will need to file a petition containing 226 signatures in 2010.

Our community is so fortunate to have dedicated individuals who are willing to hold this office knowing they will receive no salary or fees for their hard work. However, I am afraid that with the amount of work it will take to collect 226 signatures to even file for this office that these dedicated individuals will detour away from filing in 2010. I strongly believe and support that a petition containing five (5) or more signatures is sufficient and fair.

I appreciate your consideration in supporting this bill and your hard work during this 2009 legislative session. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (406) 535-5242 or elections@co.fergus.mt.us.

Sincerely,

Misti Wood
Deputy Election Administrator
Fergus County, Montana